

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The applicant's attorneys appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and remarks.

Claims 1-7, 9, 11, 13 and 20-23 have been rejected as obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Fujishima, U.S. Patent No. 6,740,952, in view of Tada, U.S. Patent No. 6,525,390, in further view of Rumennik, U.S. Patent No. 6,639,277, Van Zant, Ghandhi, Noda, U.S. Patent No. 6,617,652, and Ranjan, U.S. Patent No. 5,801,431. Reconsideration is requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to call for the semiconductor device to exhibit "a breakdown voltage of at least 600V". Support for the amendment can be found at paragraph [0025] of the specification.

The Office Action admits that Fujishima does not teach a resurf region as set forth in claim 1, but alleges that because Tada teaches a resurf region 44, the combination of the limitations of claim 1 is obvious over Fujishima and Tada. Specifically, the Office Action states that Tada "further teaches that said resurf region would secure certain breakdown voltage, would facilitate obtaining a stable and reliable breakdown voltage, and would reduce the on-resistance of Fujishima's device (see, e.g., Tada: col. 12/II. 17-37)."

First, Tada does not at all state that region 44 is a resurf region.

Second, Tada does not state that region 44 thereof would function to facilitate anything in a device shown by Fujishima. Rather, Tada only alleges that certain improvements can be made to the embodiment shown by Fig. 6 thereof (which is not at all similar to the device shown by Fujishima) if region 44 is added without compromising the ON resistance thereof.

Third, there is no teaching in Tada that the combination of region 44 and the device shown by Fujishima can result in a device that can exhibit a breakdown voltage of 600V. Note that a "certain breakdown voltage" does not indicate how much of the breakdown voltage of the device of Tada can be attributed to region 44 relative to the combination of the rest of the field relief features of the device thereof. Indeed, it appears from Figs. 13-18 that the polysilicon spirals 10 (which also appear in examples that do not include region 44 shown by Tada)

contribute the most to the breakdown voltage of the device. Thus, a fair reading of Tada does not teach a person skilled in the art that the addition of region 44 would help a device reach a breakdown voltage of 600V or more in any device.

Therefore, a skilled person would not be led to combine Fujishima and Tada to obtain a device that can exhibit a breakdown voltage of 600V or more.

Furthermore, the Office Action admits that Fujishima fails to show the first plate including a second portion spaced from the first portion of the first plate by a first gap wider than the second gap. However, the Office Action states that Rumennik teaches a first field plate with a second portion 26, which "would function to increase the breakdown voltage of Fujishima (see, e.g., Rumennik/col.4/II.42-45)."

It is respectfully submitted that Rumennik does not teach that portion 26 would increase breakdown voltage in a device shown by Fujishima. Rumennik only makes a statement about the device it discloses, not a general statement about all devices and certainly not a specific statement about Fujishima's device.

Furthermore, Rumennik does not teach or suggest that second portion 26 thereof can be combined with Fujishima and Tada to obtain a device that exhibits a breakdown voltage of at least 600 V.

To summarize, there is no teaching or suggestion in any of the cited references that would lead a skilled person to select and combine the features identified in Fujishima, Tada, and Rumennik from the hundreds of other features shown therein to obtain a device that can exhibit a breakdown voltage of at least 600V. That is, while different pieces of the device of claim 1 may be found in the cited references by using claim 1 and the preferred embodiment as a search guide, constructing such a device from the cited references is not possible without the benefit of the disclosure of the application. It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that the art of record does not set forth a prima facie case of obviousness. Reconsideration is requested.

Each of the remaining claims depends from claim 1, and, therefore, includes the limitations thereof as well as additional limitation which in combination with those of claim 1 are not shown or suggested by the art of record. Reconsideration is requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Such action is earnestly solicited.

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